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**The elementary principal as performer: Erving Goffman's  
analytical framework applied to the principalship**

Eaker, Herman Alfred, Jr., Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1989

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THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL AS PERFORMER: ERVING  
GOFFMAN'S ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK APPLIED TO THE  
PRINCIPALSHIP

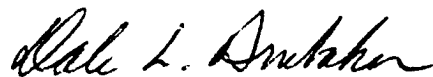
by

Herman Alfred Eaker, Jr.

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the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
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Approved by



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APPROVAL PAGE

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The purpose of this study was to provide a framework that can be used to provide additional meaning to principal leadership at the elementary school level. The study has focused on principal performances or the ability of a principal to maintain a definition of the situation throughout a presentation.

Methodology for the study was based on a qualitative research procedure containing descriptive and interpretative concepts. Additional concepts found in the study included portraiture, artistic research, case study, and sharing one's personal history.

Two major works were reviewed in detail: The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life by Erving Goffman and The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies by Seymour Sarason. The ideas of these two authors were integrated into a revised framework that included three phases of a socialization process relating to principal performances: Confronting History and Socialization - Disregarding Reality: Phase I, Confronting Reality: Phase II, and Presenting Reality: Phase III.

The study concluded that an elementary principal's awareness of factors contributing to performance disruptions and a commitment to an ongoing personal performance assessment can lead to improved principal-audience interaction.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Theories of leadership have focused on the style, traits, and behavior of leaders and the situational factors that confront the leader of a particular organization. These theories have been applied to the leadership of many organizations including the school setting (Hoy and Miskell, 1982, pp. 220-259).

In recent years, research on school leadership has identified the principal as the key to an effective school. The effective school is led by a principal who is able to create a culture characterized by strong instructional leadership, a clear instructional focus, high expectations of students and staff, a safe, orderly climate, and a system for measuring student achievement (Edmonds, 1979, pp. 15-27).

This dissertation will probe beneath the surface of the correlates of an effective school and view elementary school leadership through administrative performances. A variety of principal performances will be analyzed to identify the drama in presentations that motivates others to achieve school goals.

### Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study will be to analyze the frameworks of Erving Goffman and Seymour Sarason and to develop a revised framework that can be used to give additional meaning to leadership at the elementary school level. The writer will concentrate on portraying the essence of leader performances before various audiences. The leader's presence or bearing before others will be viewed as being more important than style, traits, or behavior.

This study of performance as derived from Goffman will focus on an elementary principal's ability to project and maintain a definition of the situation throughout a presentation. The effectiveness of a performance will depend on the principal's ability to project and maintain a definition of the situation despite the occurrences of disruptive events during the presentation (Goffman, 1959, p. 12).

It is the writer's belief that a principal's awareness of factors contributing to performance disruptions and commitment to an ongoing personal performance assessment can lead to improved audience interactions. The key goal of any personal performance assessment is to become a more consistent and authentic presenter in relating to others.

Seymour Sarason (1972) has developed a framework for creating a setting which gives attention to a leader's need for understanding the history of a setting, the activities of the leader within a setting, formation of the core group, socialization of the leader, and the creation of a setting as a work of art. His framework will be presented to assist in explaining the subtle and informal ebb and flow of daily life found in a school and its connection to administrator performances.

#### Methodology

Since this type of study is incompatible with scientific methods, a qualitative research procedure containing descriptive and interpretive concepts will be used. This procedure will be based on the idea of "social science as a public philosophy" (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton, 1985, p. 302). An intended result of this study will be to involve the educational specialists as well as lay persons in a discussion of elementary school leader performances.

Bellah, et al. (1985) explain their viewpoint in the following statements:

Social science as a public philosophy cannot be 'value free.' It accepts the canons of critical, disciplined research, but it does not imagine that such research exists in a moral vacuum....The analysts are part of the whole they are analyzing. In framing their problems and interpreting their results, they draw on their own experience and their membership in a

community of research that is in turn located within specific traditions and institutions. (pp. 302-303)

Gibson and King (1977) also advocate a type of research that places emphasis on the experiences of an individual. They view competent leadership as a social process containing both objective and subjective elements. Effective leadership is fostered not only by methods of objective explanation but also through "subjective understanding and interpretation of social action" (p. 18).

Sergiovanni (1984) supports a need for subjective understanding and interpretation. He states:

Meaning is an essential ingredient in a theory of practice. Understanding is key to the pursuit of meaning and understanding comes from interpreting the shadow and substance of observed events. (p. 281)  
....Interpretation asks what it means. Identifying implied purposes, intentions, and motives of an actor and learning of the reactions of others to same are important to interpretation. Interpretation 'recreates the actor's webs of motives and intentions.' (p. 283)

The concepts of portraiture (Lightfoot), artistic research (Eisner), case study method in social inquiry (Stake), and a biographical component are presented to give further support to the application of a qualitative research procedure. Each of these concepts conveys the importance of an individual's experiences in a setting.

Lightfoot (1983) presents "portraits" as a way of looking at schools "from the inside out" (p. 7). In this approach, she seeks to offer new understandings of schools

as "cultural windows" by using a descriptive and interpretive approach to capture the "lives, rhythms, and rituals" of a school setting. The use of "portraits" to describe school life is in sharp contrast to the standardized methods used in scientific research. The goal of portraiture is to capture the essence of school life rather than the visible symbols (p. 12). Researchers can use portraiture to help in assessing leader performances and their effect on the quality of life in a school.

Eliot Eisner (1981) presents ten distinctions between scientific and artistic research that have significance to this study. The artistic portion will serve as a framework for the descriptions and interpretations that will be included in this dissertation.

1. The forms of representation employed. In order to represent meanings, the scientific researcher uses literal form and classification of behavior to communicate. There is little opportunity to employ metaphor or poetry in the expression of meanings derived from the study. The artistic researcher seeks to create a form that derives its meaning from what is expressed.
2. The criteria for appraisal. In scientific research, there is an emphasis on validity and reliability of the results that are derived from the sampling



- procedures. In artistic research, there are no formal procedures to measure reliability. Validity is determined by how well a person is able to persuade others of a vision. The usefulness of validity depends upon whether or not it informs.
3. Points of focus. Scientific approaches to research are concerned with how people behave, and what they say and do. Artistic approaches to research focuses on the experiences that individuals or groups are having and the meaning that is being projected to others.
  4. The nature of generalization. In scientific research, there is an emphasis on random selection. The research begins with the particular and moves to the general. Artistic approaches to research emphasize the uniqueness of a situation and the generalizations that come from experiencing the qualities of the particular.
  5. The role of form. The matter of form in scientific work is standardized by requiring writers to use the third person singular or the first person plural instead of the "I" form. Artistic approaches to research regard form as "a part of the content of what is expressed" (p.8). This type of form is

unique because it allows a person to interact with what is expressed. Such interaction enables people to obtain meaning that never could be realized through a standardized form.

6. Degree of license allowed. Scientific research expects "factual representation" whereas an artistic investigator encourages the use of imagination. Artistic researchers refrain from emphasizing objective data and seek ways to relate an experience based on their observation.
7. Interest in prediction and control. Scientific research emphasizes predicting and controlling the future. Artistic research engages in a more flexible approach by attempting to interpret and explain experiences.
8. The sources of data. Scientific researchers employ the use of standardized methods of gathering and sharing data. In artistic approaches, the investigator is the major source of data. The data to be shared is obtained from the investigator's experiences and is reported in a non-standard way. The researcher's method of reporting is based on how the data will be interpreted by those who obtain it. In this method, each report becomes a "custom job."

9. The basis of knowing. The scientific researcher seeks "emotional neutrality" to communicate what is known. Standardized methods of gathering and sharing data are used. Artistic researchers place emotion at the center of any knowledge to be communicated. Also, they employ a variety of non-standard forms to obtain knowledge. An artistic researcher's views are expressed in the following statements:

Methodological pluralism rather than methodological monism is the ideal to which artistic approaches to research subscribe.....To know a rose by its Latin name and yet to miss its fragrance is to miss much of the rose's meaning. Artistic approaches to research are very much interested in helping people experience the fragrance. (p. 9)

10. Ultimate aims. The aims of scientific researchers are concerned with the discovery of truth. These aims are attained by utilizing a consistent and logical approach in solving a problem. Artistic researchers seek to establish meaning as the ultimate aim for understanding our world. In order to obtain meaning, these researchers use an approach characterized by "diverse interpretation and coherence" (p. 9).

As stated in Part 5 of Eisner's differences between scientific and artistic research, the "I" form allows the writer to interact with what is being expressed. In Chapter

IV, this form will be used so that the writer can interact with his written observations of other principal performances and the meanings derived from personal interaction while serving in the role of principal.

Robert Stake (1978) claims that researchers often will prefer the case study method. This method can help persons to add to their understanding "by approximating through the words and illustrations of our reports, the natural experiences acquired in ordinary personal involvement" (p. 5).

To understand Stake's case study method, it is essential to recognize the differences between propositional and tacit knowledge. Propositional knowledge relates more to explanation whereas tacit knowledge is associated with understanding.

Whether researchers use a scientific study or case study method will depend on the aims that are established. If propositional knowledge, explanation, and law are the aims, the researcher would benefit by seeking truth through a more objective and scientific study. If the aim is tacit knowledge or "understanding, extension of experience, and increase in conviction in that which is known" (p. 6), the researcher's use of the case study would be the preferred method.

In using the case study method, administrators are able to produce "naturalistic generalizations" or "how things

are, why they are, how people feel about them, and how these things are likely to be later on in other places which this person is familiar" (p. 6). By using these generalizations, a leader can start to understand why a certain performance resulted in an audience being motivated to respond in a positive manner to a specific task.

In addition to the principles of portraiture, artistic research, and case study method, this study will include a biographical component. The inclusion of a biographical dimension will provide an opportunity for recalling previous experiences as an elementary school principal so that assessments of performances before groups or individuals can be made. Also, performances of principals who served as a mentor to this writer will be remembered and described in this section.

Brubaker (1982) encourages curriculum planners to give attention to sharing their personal history as a way of placing value on the participants in a setting. He states:

The challenge is to think through and then express the patterns and principles that have been operative in one's own educational experience. In the process, the curriculum-planner as autobiographer will achieve a deeper self understanding generally. (p. 7)

Berman (1985) offers a view similar to Brubaker. She emphasizes the value of teachers sharing their personal knowledge of curriculum development in the following statements:

Knowing and being can become as one when the inner workings and strivings of persons are shared, enhanced, and enlarged. Indeed knowing and being become infinite possibilities never realized when curriculum is seen as the text that is out there rather than within the person....Application of techniques derived from hermeneutic activity and ethnographic procedure gives opportunity to move education as technical enterprise to education as a valuing of persons including their inner knowledge and being. (p. 71)

The views of Brubaker and Berman can be applied to administrators who share with others the knowledge they have acquired from various interactions. As administrators share with colleagues the "tacit" knowledge obtained from effective presentations before audiences, they are able to realize a greater sense of authority and worth.

The biographical component will be discussed in Chapter IV. In this chapter, there will be descriptions of performances of both the writer and immediate supervisors who served as principals. By recalling and examining prior elementary administrative presentations and observations, the writer can move beyond an awareness of a leader's style, traits, or behavior and strive to capture the substance of those performances that helped to define the situation and influence the audiences in the workplace. By using this approach, the writer will be functioning in a dual role as observer and participant (Kinchen, 1984, pp. 16-17).

In assessing a performance, the leader must analyze and understand the leadership act that caused a certain event to happen. Greenfield (1984) states that "leaders are

therefore arbiters and constructors of social reality.... Their acts are moral acts and to know them we must surely understand how the act is accomplished" (p.160). If "acts" are understood as performances in a setting, leaders can obtain meaning from those "acts" by identifying the basic assumptions that contributed to their performances.

Brubaker (1982) describes basic assumptions in curriculum development by using an iceberg metaphor. The basic assumptions that provide support for curriculum development are found below the waterline. The actual planning processes constitute the tip of the iceberg (p. 19).

When the iceberg metaphor is applied to leader performances, the principal-audience interaction process is positioned at the tip of the iceberg. The leader's basic assumptions about interaction are found below the waterline. An examination of these assumptions can provide a leader with an understanding of how they can affect the manner (non-verbal expressions) of a presentation and the audience's receptiveness to the matter (content).

#### Definition of Key Terms

As stated in the methodology section, there will be an emphasis on description and interpretation of meanings in this dissertation. Since two frameworks will be studied, there is a need to identify and define key components of

each. To assist in this process, Israel Scheffler's kinds of definitions will be used to explain key concepts.

Scheffler (1968) classifies general definitions into stipulative, descriptive, and programmatic categories. It is important to understand each as they relate to terms that will be used to explain administrator performances.

"Stipulative" definitions help to understand "a given term in a special way for the space of some discourse or throughout several discourses of the same type" (p. 13). The intent of these definitions focuses on communication. This kind of definition is divided into inventive and non-inventive types. Inventive stipulative definitions include those terms that have no prior usage. Non-inventive stipulative definitions provide a "new use for a term with a prior, accepted usage" (p. 13).

"Descriptive" definitions give an account of the prior usage of terms. These definitions govern discussions and explain what certain terms mean.

"Programmatic" definitions are used as an expression of a practical program. They may be used to express serious moral choices. The purpose of these definitions is to embody a program of action.

The following terms are presented to give the reader an understanding of their meaning throughout this study. To obtain their full meaning, these terms need to be applied to a basic knowledge of theater and their connection to



leadership in a school setting. With the exception of the stipulative definition for "communication," and the non-inventive stipulative/programmatic definition for "performance," each of the terms will be explained by a descriptive definition.

Performance - This term is defined "as all the activity of a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (Goffman, 1959, p. 15).

Communication - This word is explained as the non-verbal, unintentional presentations or "expressions given off" in interactions with audiences (Goffman, 1959, p. 4).

Interaction - Goffman (1959) explains this term as "all of the interaction which occurs throughout any one occasion when a given set of individuals are in one another's continuous presence" (p. 15). The term encounter could be used without losing any of the intended meaning.

Definition of the Situation - This term is basic to Goffman's performance framework. When an individual appears before an audience, he must project a definition of the situation or an image that lets others know that he is indeed all that they expected

him to be. To be a successful performer, the leader must maintain this definition throughout a presentation (Goffman, 1959, p. 4).

Region - This term is defined as "any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception" (Goffman, 1959, p. 106). This bounded area can either be a front region where the performance is given or a back region where the performer can step out of character without fear of audience intrusion (Goffman, 1959, pp. 106-112).

Sincerity - This word is used to describe authentic and genuine persons "who believe in the impression fostered by their own performance" (Goffman, 1959, p.18). The term cynicism represents an opposing view. The cynic is an individual who does not believe in his act and shows no concern for the beliefs of his audience.

Setting - Sarason (1972) defines this term as "...any instance where two or more people come together in new and sustained relationships to achieve certain goals..." (p. IX).

#### Map for Remainder of the Dissertation

The remainder of the dissertation will focus on a review of related literature that includes selected works of Goffman and Sarason (Chapter II). In Chapter III Goffman's

framework will be identified, critiqued, and revised. Chapter IV will contain an application of the revised framework with emphasis on the writer's performances and observations of selected performances in various settings over a period of time. The final chapter will provide a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In Chapter I, administrative performances were considered as a way of providing additional meaning to leadership at the elementary level. The chapter contained the purpose and significance of the study, a methodology section that featured qualitative research procedures, definitions of key terms, and general statements about the remaining chapters of the study.

The review of related literature will begin with Erving Goffman's presentation of self framework. Next, the basic structure of Seymour Sarason's creation of settings will be presented. The review will conclude with selected writings that relate to principal performances.

Before a review of literature is initiated, three major "forms and contents" of literature produced in educational administration will be identified and described. Boyan (1982) identifies them as (1) the professional-normative, (2) the scholarly-normative, and (3) the scholarly-descriptive (p.23).

Articles in the professional-normative literature are written by the practitioners or educational administrators at various levels and by executives of administrator

organizations. This literature consists of the writings of administrators who desire to share their success stories and convictions with colleagues.

Most of the writings of this class take the form of anecdotes or recommendations for improving administrative practice. Their value is found in the expression of "actual" or "potential" solutions to the concerns and problems of administrators. The professional-normative literature can be found in the journals of various associations of school administrators and supervisors.

A second class of literature, the scholarly-normative, is produced by two subsets of professors of educational administration. One subset spends their time preparing practitioners and serving as consultants. The second subset concentrates on producing original research or scholarship and solving administrative problems in educational institutions.

The articles of these professors are published in "special purpose reports" for various associations or in a "collection of essays" representing the efforts of a professor or the combined efforts of "professors and practitioners." Sometimes articles in this category consider management models from "noneducational sources" and apply them to school settings.

The greatest amount of scholarly-normative literature is found in textbooks. According to Boyan, only a small

number of the texts "systematically develop or treat connections across task areas, administrative processes, theoretical developments, research findings, and patterns of work" (p.23).

The publications from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse on Educational Management are classified as scholarly-normative literature. These publications include (1) The Best of ERIC; (2) The Best of the Best of ERIC; (3) reviews; (4) research analysis papers; and state-of-the-knowledge monographs (general, school law, and administrator preparation). The monographs also can be classified as scholarly-descriptive.

In reviewing the scholarly-descriptive literature, Boyan discovered this class of literature was becoming more specialized and fragmented. Also, he found the volume of this classification of literature to be small when compared with the professional-normative and the scholarly-normative. Doctoral students produce much of the scholarly-descriptive literature. Professors of educational administration are contributing to this literature by directing a total of 1,000 to 1,200 dissertations per year. These dissertations are published only in Dissertation Abstracts.

Publications that contain scholarly-descriptive articles include "several well-regarded journals, monographs, edited collections, and commissioned papers" (p.23). Educational administrative publications that

contain scholarly-descriptive literature include the Administrator's Notebook, the Educational Administration Quarterly, the Journal of Educational Administration, and the Journal of Educational Administration and History. Educational Administration and Executive Review are newer publications.

Scholarly-descriptive manuscripts are found in the following publications: Education and Urban Society, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Journal of Collective Negotiations in the Public Sector, Journal of Law and Education, School Law Journal, Sociology of Education, and Urban Education. These publications also contain works that are exclusive of educational administration. Many scholars deem it necessary to review Administrative Science Quarterly on a regular basis.

#### Presentation of Self Framework

In his book, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Erving Goffman (1959) provides a theatrical framework for viewing persons as they engage in interaction with various audiences. The focus of his book emphasizes the daily face to face encounters of individuals and their attempts to control the impression others will obtain from them. Goffman's purpose in writing the book is to examine the

non-verbal expressions "given off" by individuals as they communicate with one another.

In Chapter I, Goffman defines individual performances and describes specific terms explaining the activity occurring before or during presentations. Individual performances will be explained in greater detail in Chapter III of this dissertation and applied to the roles of an elementary school principal.

### Team Performances

After discussing individual performances, Goffman discusses in Chapter II those performances involving more than one participant. A "performance team" or "team" is composed of individuals who cooperate to maintain a given impression or present a single routine. In addition to relying on principles found in individual performances, team performances require dependency, familiarity with routine, agreement by performers on the parts to be played, use of directors, and variables found within a performance.

Performers depend on each other to behave in a manner that will not disrupt the performance. This "bond of reciprocal dependency" extends across social structure, formal status, and rank of the team members. When team members cooperate to maintain a definition of a situation, they are considered to be familiar with the routine and are careful to insure that their individual impression or



"front" projected outside the team performance is different from the impression being projected collectively as members of a team. As a one person team, an individual can project a certain impression and make it appropriate to his situation and interests due to his performance being one he has chosen. As a team member his role must fit in with the roles of each of the persons who are committed to the presentation and have knowledge of all its parts.

In order for team performances to work, there must be the appearance that all members are in agreement with the line being presented. Performers must be loyal, sincere, authentic, and demonstrate they can be trusted to maintain a certain line. If a certain impression is to be maintained in a team performance, an individual of the team is expected to refrain from joining both the team and the audience. To explain this point, Goffman uses an example of a proprietor of a ladies' apparel shop who explains to customers that a dress is on sale because the dress is soiled or it is the last one in stock. The true reason is due to the dress being out of style or a bad color. The proprietor must make sure that extra persons hired to handle customers during busy times of the year are not regular customers but residents of neighborhoods outside the area where the store is located. If a regular customer is hired, the proprietor destroys the impression being fostered by the team of sales personnel.

To insure that a performance gives a certain impression, a director is chosen to handle disruptive activities and bring back in line any performer who has moved away from the intended presentation. A second responsibility of the director is the allocation of parts and the fronts to be used in the performance. These responsibilities place the director in a "marginal" position half way between the performers and audience.

Dramatic and directorial dominance are two performance variables displayed in team performances. Dramatic dominance involves an individual who is the center of the show. A person who is directorially dominant is in charge of directing the performance. There are times in performances when an individual is both dramatically and directorially dominant.

Another performance variable involves situations where certain performers are considered as "window dressing" or involved in a performance from the standpoint of activity only. These individuals present a front of respectability for the organization and perform purely for ceremonial purposes. Other performers on the same team differ in the amount of time and effort that they spend between dramatic presentation and window dressing activities.

### Regions and Region Behavior

Regions are used in this framework to indicate "any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception" (p.106). Most performances are given in highly bounded regions. In the front region, a performer attempts to make sure all the activity meets certain standards. These standards are expressed in two groupings. One grouping entitled "politeness" relates to how the performer acts or the manner of an individual during the time spent before an audience. The other grouping labeled "decorum" is explained by the appearance given by a performer. It is in the front region where key aspects to the performance are emphasized.

The area where suppressed facts become evident is the back region or back stage. The activity that occurs in this area is contradictory to the activity being presented in the front region. This region contains the props for the setting, a place where actors can relax, adjust costumes, and drop their front. While in this area, the performers can expect that the audience will be unable to hear or observe the various activities being conducted.

Through decorations and permanent fixtures, regions tend to display a unique character that extends beyond a particular performance. School buildings and cathedrals retain a front region character even though school is not in session or a worship experience has ended. Repairmen in

these buildings tend to demonstrate some degree of reverence as these areas project a structured place and a feeling that the structure should be maintained. Other buildings such as hunting lodges and locker rooms are considered backstage areas where certain standards do not have to be maintained. A particular area can serve as a front region or back region depending on the activity being conducted at the time. Some offices of executives are decorated in such a manner that they project a front stage appearance. These same offices can serve as a back stage area for the executive to relax and engage in activities that would be inappropriate for a front region.

A third type of region is comprised of individuals who are cut off from both the performance and the audience. Individuals in this region are called "outsiders." When the outsider interrupts a performance in progress, another performance is created. The performance created by the interruption causes the performers to present an impression that normally would be given at a different time and place.

By means of audience segregation, a performer is able to keep individuals from seeing a presentation inconsistent with another presentation. Also, the performer tries to make sure that individuals do not become audiences to a presentation performed in the past that is inconsistent with a previous presentation.

Audience segregation is accomplished by scheduling presentations so that the performers can move from one front to another without having to handle two audiences at the same time. If an intrusion occurs, performers can handle the situation in one of three ways. The participants in the region can switch to a definition of the situation that incorporates the intruder. A second approach involves giving a welcome to the intruder and making him feel he should have been a part of the region from the beginning. A final course of action would focus on the participants treating the intruder as if he were not even present or requesting that he stay out of the region.

### Discrepant Roles

In order to maintain a definition of the situation, a team of performers will need to over-communicate some facts and under-communicate others. If these facts are not kept secret, the impression being fostered by the team can be disrupted, discredited, or be made useless. Goffman lists five types of secrets that help to bind the team together. They are dark secrets, strategic secrets, inside secrets, entrusted secrets, and free secrets.

Dark secrets are those that are hidden and not expressed in an open atmosphere. A major characteristic of dark secrets is the way they conceal or misrepresent the real facts behind a performance.

Strategic secrets involve the "intentions and capacities" of a team which are concealed so that the audience will not be able to determine future activities. This type of secret is usually revealed whereas the dark secrets are kept secret forever.

The third type of secret, "inside secrets," gives the group a feeling of separation from those not considered to be "in the know." Inside secrets have little strategic value.

The final two types of secrets relate to information known by one team of another. An entrusted secret is a secret that must be kept by a performer if he is to be all that he says he is and maintain his relationship to the team. Free secrets are undisclosed secrets known of another person but if they were disclosed would not destroy an impression being fostered by the person engaged in a performance.

There are several varieties of persons who serve to reveal backstage information to the audience. They include:

1. Informer - a person who gains membership on a team by pretending to be a member but after obtaining membership gives away the secrets of the performance.

2. Shill - a person who acts as if he is an "ordinary member" of the audience when in fact he is a member of the team. The role of the shill is to find a place in the audience where he can assist in obtaining the response needed by the performance team.
3. Spotter - a person who goes underground to find out if the audience or consumer is being given the service or treatment they should be afforded.
4. Agent - a person who finds a place in the audience and when the performance is over reports to his employer what he has seen.
5. Mediator - a person who serves as a go-between. He is considered as a double shill as he gives the impression to each side that secrets will be kept and he will be more loyal to one side than to another.
6. Non-person - a person who has access to backstage areas and can reveal backstage information. Persons in this category include servants, the sick, and the very old. They are considered to be non entities even though their actions are being expressed in a front region.

Other classifications of discrepant roles include service specialists, confidants, and colleagues. The service specialist obtains a backstage view of a performance by helping in the construction, repair, or maintenance of the show. The confidant is an outsider who participates in front and back region activity. This person receives information from another person due to his relationship as a friend who can be trusted. Colleagues are persons "who present the same routine to the same type of audience but who do not participate together, as teammates do, at the same time and place before the same particular audience" (p.160).

#### Communication out of Character

When a performance disruption occurs, a performer or performance team faces a situation in which the projected definition of the situation is threatened. This "communication out of character" results in a performer uttering certain expressions or making facial gestures that contradict the intended line of the presentation. Four types of communication that present contradictory information and reduce the effectiveness of the performance are treatment of the absent, staging talk, team collusion, and realigning actions.

Treatment of the absent or "behind the back talk" is accomplished by performers engaging in mock role playing or



making uncomplimentary references to the audience. Mock role playing involves some team members assuming the role of audience while others stage a performance. This type of interaction shows disrespect toward the audience when it is compared with the impression being maintained when the team performs before a real audience. Types of uncomplimentary reference include slighting a person behind his back by using only a nickname or last name but when face to face with the same person, a proper and polite greeting of "Mr." or "Sir" is used.

Staging talk, "shop talk," or "gossip" refers to the conversations of colleagues regarding all aspects of a performance including lines, sign equipment, positions, sizes and character of audiences, potential disruptions, and the reception given to past performances. Persons involved in staging talk may be of differing social rank but their conversations before and after a performance are very similar.

Team collusion is explained as "any collusive communication which is carefully conveyed in such a way as to cause no threat to the illusion that is being fostered for the audience" (p. 177). The collusion is realized through staging cues (secret signals between team members), derisive collusion (secret belittling of an audience), a team member's communication for the secret amusement of the team (exaggerated enthusiasm that can not be detected by the

audience). Another example of collusion involves the individual who is interacting with a second individual while at the same time catching the eye of an outsider in an attempt to confirm that he is not to be held responsible for the conduct of this second person.

Realigning actions or "putting out feelers" are used to determine if a performer can dispense with the current definition of the situation and create a new set of roles without breaking down a defensive stand that has been taken in the current situation. This "feeling out" process can be accomplished through "unofficial grumbling" (dropping of hints, innuendo, or well-placed jokes that can be denied if accused by another as presenting something unacceptable), guarded disclosure (gradually disclosing something about oneself), double talk (sharing information with another person that conflicts with their official relationship), and fraternization of opposing specialists (members of opposing teams with the same role temporarily aligning themselves through "collusive looks" while maintaining the presence of opposition).

### The Arts of Impression Management

The impression being fostered by the participants of a performance is threatened by the occurrence of unintentional gestures and scenes, inopportune intrusions into backstage areas, and the introduction of intentional statements or

non-verbal facts that would be avoided if the individual had known in advance the consequences of his activity (faux pas). In order to save performances from these happenings, performers use defensive measures, protective measures, and adjustments to hints from the audience to protect them from embarrassing situations.

Defensive practices or attributes of team members involved in saving a performance include dramaturgical loyalty, dramaturgical discipline, and dramaturgical circumspection. Dramaturgical loyalty involves teammates sticking with the script and refraining from sharing team secrets. A performer who has dramaturgical discipline is one who possesses self control, knows his part, and watches his body language so that no unintentional gestures or behavior are allowed to discredit the performance. Dramatic circumspection is expressed through choosing loyal and disciplined team members capable of adjusting and conducting a performance based on the circumstances under which it will be staged.

One protective practice that is used to save performances involves the audience assisting with controlling the access to front and back stage areas by staying away from areas where they have not been invited. Another practice focuses on performers relying on cues from the audience to determine if the intended line is being

rejected by the audience and an adjustment is necessary to save the the performance.

This adjustment by performers to hints from the audience is viewed as "tact regarding tact" meaning the performer must react very quickly to the protective practice being given or else face the consequences of failing to manage an impression. If the performer distorts the facts, he must follow etiquette and accomplish the misrepresentation within the rules or else the audience will not be able to assist the performer with the intended impression.

#### The Creation of Settings Framework

Seymour Sarason (1972) develops a "settings" framework in his book The Creation of Settings and Future Societies. He defines a setting as "... any instance where two or more people come together in new and sustained relationships to achieve certain goals..." (p.1X). Settings are defined further as programs, institutions, and organizations rather than physical locations. The most frequent instance in the creation of a setting is marriage. The most ambitious instance involves activities associated with a revolution.

Settings are created either from older settings or from efforts of people to establish new ones. The rationale for creating new and independent settings is explained by two factors: (1) existing settings are inadequate and (2)

conflicts in the decision making process of a setting are so intense they can be resolved only by creating a new setting.

Persons responsible for creating a setting believe their efforts will lead to a superior and better social structure. The term "zeitgist" is used to explain the feelings of participants involved in creating a new setting. Zeitgist is explained as "...what is in the air, and what is in the air derives from the existing social structure" (p. 25).

The success in developing a new setting will depend on the following: (1) Being aware of the importance of local history, (2) Recognizing the relationship between settings and historical forces, (3) Realizing the need to define problems in such a way that the professional groups who are called for assistance will know exactly what services are being requested, and (4) Maintaining a balance between concern for others and for members of the core group involved in the daily operation of the setting. Other major considerations in planning and implementing a new setting include utilizing available knowledge, reaching agreement on ideas and values, accepting the reality of limited resources to accomplish tasks, and understanding the socialization process of the person selected as leader for the setting.

In creating a new setting, there is a tendency to plan, construct, and occupy a new facility at the same time staff members and programs for the setting are being selected.

The construction phase for a new institution becomes a major distraction to the creation of a setting. Furthermore, the community sees the new institution as "the place where all relevant problems are or should be sent thereby weakening or eliminating whatever community tendencies may have existed to accept responsibility for the problem" (p. 169).

### Before The Beginning

Before creating a setting, Sarason asks that leaders confront the history of a setting. This can be accomplished by analyzing the origins of a new setting, the structured relationships that will be a part of the new setting, and the new setting's relationship to other settings. By applying historical knowledge to a new setting or one created from an existing setting, leaders should be able to understand the rationale for past decisions and be prepared to anticipate future problems.

### Leader and Beginning Context

The importance of choosing an "insider" as leader rather than an "outsider" helps to avoid morale problems as the "insider" knows the history, formal and informal organizational culture, and the concerns of those desiring to establish a new setting. Once the leader is chosen, he should strive to make decisions based on an intellectual rather than emotional process. Sarason states that

"creating a setting is as much an affair of the head as it is the heart" (p.67).

It is extremely difficult for the leader to control all the complicated processes taking place as a setting is being created. Some of these processes relate to issues that must be resolved in the planning stage and maintained throughout the creation of the setting.

Openness or making public what is being thought and felt by the leader will contribute to achieving the goals of the setting. The leader must be willing to face conflicting ideas and values and problems arising from limited resources. The leader's orientation toward a concern for others (external) versus a concern for those who have created and are working in the new setting (internal) will have an effect on the new setting. The leader must maintain a rational approach in creating a "superior" setting, preserve tradition, protect the setting from outside influences, and be careful not to alienate members of the existing setting who were not selected for membership in the new setting.

#### Formation of the Core Group

The core group within a new setting consists of those people who interact with the leader in a personal way and share a similar status. Before core group members are chosen, the leader needs to consider the matters of

personality, differing styles, governance, personal needs of members, and agreement on goals. If the matter of governance is not settled prior to the creation of the setting, the purposes for which the setting was created can become secondary to the detailed, practical matters of managing the setting.

The problems between the leader and core group can differ depending on whether the new setting emerged from an existing organization of settings or from the idea and efforts of a single individual. Problems must be solved without it appearing the leader is taking sides on an issue. If problems are unresolved, the setting will begin to show symptoms of decline.

Symptoms signalling a decline for a new setting include the departure of a leader, the loss of some core members, and talk of reorganization. Three reasons are given to explain a decline. First, the leader and core group did not come to complete agreement on matters of values, goals, and resources for the new setting. Secondly, the establishment of an organization chart was based on a pyramidal versus horizontal structure. Thirdly, core member's boredom led to dissatisfaction with work. When the challenge of creating a setting is no longer there and the novelty and curiosity has diminished, the leader and core group face a loss of stimulation and excitement and begin to be bored with activities in the setting.



The importance of providing personal and professional growth needs of core group members and services for others presents a special challenge for the leader. Individual growth, diversity, and differentiation for each core group member is necessary if work is to be challenging, interesting, and unpredictable.

### Myth of Unlimited Resources

The task or goal of a setting is connected to its resources and is a reflection of the values of the members of the setting. In the early stages of creating a setting, two myths are perpetuated by the leader and core group members. The first myth is described as an unrealistic expectation that the new setting will have unlimited resources to accomplish its goals. A second myth that interacts with the first is explained by the leader and core group members assumption that the new setting will be free from the troubles that have plagued other settings. These two myths can be dispelled if the leader and core group members will schedule sufficient time during the planning stage to discuss available and anticipated resources and potential problems that could have an effect on the setting.

### Socialization of the Leader

The socialization process of leaders involves "a series of encounters each of which has internal and external

aspects in some conflict with each other" (p. 200). In any encounter, the leader must decide if he is going to share his true feelings on an issue or just engage in public rhetoric. Sarason states "leaders, like the bulk of humanity, do not find it easy to make their experiences public, and what they tend to omit is crucial for understanding the creation of settings" (p. 184). In most encounters, leaders decide to present themselves in a "socially acceptable way" or a way that fits the "perceived social norms."

Leaders can contribute more to our understanding of the development of a setting if they would relate personal experiences instead of talking of their various roles. Instead of talking about their job description, leaders should share their "feelings, fantasies, ambition, guilt and joys" (pp. 185-186).

Prior to assuming a leadership role, an aspiring leader's private thoughts center on his superiority to lead a particular setting. The potential leader feels he has superior strength, values, wisdom, vision, and views others "in the setting as if they need to be protected against a stern reality which they could not comprehend, would find upsetting, and about which they would not know how to act precisely because they are not leaders" (p.219).

In creating a setting, a leader possesses some degree of anxiety, doubt, and loneliness that must be kept hidden

from the core group. He must be sure morale is high and appear strong if he is to give strength to others. There is a part of the leader he can not "publicly articulate and that even when he has to do so words are inadequate vehicles for reflecting the concreteness and nuances of experiences" (p.223).

The leader's interaction with the core group presents numerous problems that always relate to many other problems within the setting. By practicing the concept of mutuality, the leader and core group should be able to reduce the amount of time needed to solve problems within the setting. Sarason explains mutuality as "what the leader expects and gives to others and what others should expect and give to him" (p. 223).

Also, the leader must work to make sure core group members maintain a high level of motivation and enthusiasm while at the same time giving quality service to the beneficiaries of the setting. Major problems can surface if the leader inhibits core group members need for autonomy and productive self development in the creation and subsequent operation of the setting.

#### The New Setting as a Work of Art

The creation of a setting is a complicated process that involves the knowledge of the setting, the prehistory of the setting, a sense of "superior" mission and great enthusiasm

by leader and core group members, the interaction between the leader and core group members, and the realization that the usual structure of the setting can often lead to boredom by the leader and core group members. Other features of this process include an awareness that conflict over goals and ideas will be a part of the setting, the fact that resources are always limited, and that the leader experiences a socialization process in his planning, organizing, and managing the efforts that are involved in creating a setting.

The process of creating a setting is viewed as a work of art that has more than one artist. It involves problems of purpose, materials, and relationships. The products created by the setting are different and its place and association with society are different.

### The Principalship

In a review of literature on the principalship, we find that the concepts involved in principal performances and the creation of settings can be connected to some recent literature that relates to school leadership. Recent literature on school leadership focuses on principal effectiveness and the role of the principal as culture builder.

### The Principal as Effective Leader

A common characteristic of effective principals that is found in most of the literature is leadership in improving student achievement on standardized tests. Other characteristics of effective principals include setting clearly stated goals, maintaining an orderly and peaceful school climate, having high expectations for students and staff, monitoring instructional goals frequently, and demonstrating strong leadership in management and instruction (Edmonds, 1979, pp. 15-27). In addition to these characteristics, the National Association of Elementary School Principals review of several research studies included time and people management and clear sense of purpose as other key factors in principal effectiveness (Amundson, 1981, p.1).

In another review of research related to effective instructional leadership, Sweeney (1982) added support of teachers to the aforementioned factors (p. 205). Austin (1981) reviewed six studies conducted by researchers in six states. From the findings, Austin summarized that principals of exemplary elementary schools were able to accomplish the following:

1. Create a sense of direction for the school.
2. Execute their designated leadership role.
3. Foster academic expectations.
4. Recruit their own staff.
5. Have more advanced training.
6. Tend to have an education as elementary school

- teacher.
7. Have a particular competence in one area of the curriculum, such as reading or mathematics. (p.53)

Effective principals are able to create a vision for their school setting and understand "their role in making that vision a reality" (Manasse, 1984, p. 44). Through an organizational vision, the principal is able to bring various groups and individuals into a relationship where all are working toward a common goal. Patterson, Purkey, and Parker (1986) define vision as "...the product of exercising many skills in a holistic way to create a mental picture of what the future could and should look like" (p.88). Bennis (1985) describes six dimensions of vision: foresight (looking into the future), hindsight (looking backwards), world view (interpreting trends and development), depth perception (able to see the big picture), peripheral vision (comprehending the new direction), and revision (reviewing all of the previous visions as the environment changes) (pp. 102-103).

Another crucial factor relating to principal effectiveness is the interpersonal relationships included in the principal's daily routine. In a discussion of power and leadership, Burns (1978) states "... personal influence is exerted quietly and subtly in everyday relationships" (p. 442). Krajewski (1979) agrees with Burns by explaining that an administrator's duties within a certain role are "...affected via interaction with people....how the school's

administrator works with people in the everyday situations is the basic determinant of overall success" (p.53).

In all interactions, principals should strive to be positive and mindful that their expectations are being communicated to teachers through verbal and non-verbal ways such as "...comments, evaluations, tone of voice, facial expressions, and other mannerisms...." (Washington, 1980, p.6). Johnston, Markle, and Forrer (1984) state that effective school administrators are:

...professional, democratic, and have a high degree of people orientation, as well as a concern for task accomplishment....They emphasize open communication and teacher participation, and they actively involve the staff in decision-making. This productive relationship extends to students, parents, and other community members and groups. (p.16)

### The Principal as Culture Builder

Principals who are culture builders are concerned with the informal, subtle, and symbolic aspects of school life (Sergiovanni, 1984, p.10). Sergiovanni (1984) defines cultural leadership in the following manner:

Leadership acts are expressions of culture. Leadership as cultural expression seeks to build unity and order within an organization by giving attention to purposes, historical and philosophical tradition, and ideals and norms which define the way of life within the organization and which provide the bases for socializing members and obtaining their compliance. (pp.106-107)

School culture can be described as a "power and control" issue involving "conflict and negotiation over definitions of situations" (Bates, 1984, pp. 271-272). The way an administrator views power and control influences significantly the culture of the school. Bates states:

The administrative influence on school language, metaphors, myths, and ritual is a major factor in the determination of the culture which is reproduced in the consciousness of teachers and pupils. Whether that culture is largely based on metaphors, of participatory democracy, equity, and cultural liberation or on metaphors of capital accumulation, hierarchy, and domination is at least partly attributable to the exercise of administrative authority during the negotiation of what is to count as culture in the school. (p.272)

Saphier and King (1985) explain school culture through twelve norms that affect school improvement and have implications for the school leader. These norms are:

1. Collegiality.
2. Experimentation.
3. High expectations.
4. Trust and confidence.
5. Tangible support.
6. Reaching out to the knowledge bases.
7. Appreciation and recognition.
8. Caring, celebration, and humor.
9. Involvement in decision making.
10. Protection of what's important.
11. Traditions.
12. Honest, open, communication. (p.67)

Deal (1987) points out that school leaders become culture builders by promoting those aspects that give meaning to an organization. These aspects include shared values, celebration of heroes, rituals, ceremonies, stories,



and the network of informal persons who reinforce and protect the existing ways of the school (p.6).

Leaders who are culture builders must behave in accordance with the values of the organization. Their verbal commitment to values must be backed up with action that reflects that commitment. The leader "is 'on stage' all the time - no one listens to what you say, they watch what you do" (Blendinger and Jones, 1988, p.26).

### Summary

The review of literature examined the frameworks of Goffman and Sarason and concluded with a portion related to the principalship. Goffman presented information on team performances, regions and region behavior, discrepant roles, communication out of character, and the measures that contribute to the art of impression management. Sarason's framework included a definition of a setting and the following aspects involved in creating a setting: the importance of confronting history, the leader and the beginning context, formation of the core group, limited resources, the socialization process of the leader, and the new setting as a work of art. The principalship section considered the principal as effective leader and builder of a unique school culture.

### CHAPTER III

#### AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS PERFORMER

The review of literature in Chapter II included Goffman's presentation of self framework, Sarason's creation of settings framework, and selected writings on the principal as effective leader and culture builder. This chapter will begin with a description of individual performances and their application to the role of an elementary school principal. The concluding part of the chapter will contain a revised framework and operational guidelines for the elementary school principal as performer.

##### Individual Performance Framework

Performances consist of all the activity an individual uses to influence others. Goffman applies the following seven concepts to explain his individual performance framework: fronts, dramatic realization, idealization, maintenance of expressive control, misrepresentation, mystification, and reality and contrivance.

Fronts are parts of a performance that define the situation for the audience. These parts are general and fixed and include the setting and personal fronts. The setting includes the physical features such as props, furniture, decor, and the physical layout. Personal fronts consist of "insignia of office or rank, clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics, size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like" (Goffman, 1959, p. 24). Personal fronts are subdivided into two categories of "appearance" and "manner."

Appearance refers to the stimuli that project the social status of a performer. The stimuli assist the audience with determining the temporary condition of the performer as well as the type of activity being conducted at that time. The appearance expresses to the audience whether the activity is formal or informal.

Manner is described as the stimuli that expresses to the audience the role to be played by a performer in interaction with others. The expected role that is projected by the performer's manner can be contradicted as when a performer of higher social status acts in a manner reflecting intimacy or equality with members of the audience. The manner of a performer helps to create for the audience an expectation that the performer will act in a way that is consistent with expressions given at other times before audiences.

For a performer to make an impression on others, he must use dramatic realization or organize all of his activity so that he expresses the intended message. Based on a performer's role, the dramatic realization being expressed will vary. The work of certain performers such as policemen and surgeons require little or no dramatization while the work of nurses is difficult to dramatize due to some parts of their work being interpreted as non-work by the audience. The nurse, who stops to talk with a patient, is also fulfilling her role by making a visual check of the patient's physical appearance, breathing or other potential problems. Some observers view the talk as non-productive activity and contrary to a nurse's role.

In appearances before audiences, performers attempt to give an impression of themselves as being ideal or as persons who reflect "the accredited values of society." The idealized impression is created only for a specific performance as the performer's behavior in other situations not requiring special performances may contradict the values of society.

Performers maintain an idealized impression by engaging in sacrifice and concealment. Goffman (1959) explains this view in the following statement:

Often we find that if the principal ideal aims of an organization are to be achieved, then it will be necessary at times to by-pass momentarily other ideals

of the organization, while maintaining the impression that these other ideals are still in force. (p. 45)

An example of sacrifice involves a person who lives frugally in day to day situations so that he can serve lavish meals to visitors on special occasions. Another example is demonstrated by a girl who plays down those personal traits that will threaten her chances of being considered for a date by a certain boy. A final example of idealization occurs when a welfare agent, on approaching a house containing welfare recipients, overhears a family member calling to another to hide the wine and food before the agent enters the house.

A performance that is characterized by concealment includes indulging in secret pleasures as when an older child shows little concern for television program scheduled for younger children, but finds a way to watch these programs without being noticed. Also, a housewife who practices economy by serving inexpensive substitutes for certain foods while maintaining an impression that the food is of high quality is engaged in concealment. Another concealment activity involves a person correcting errors and mistakes before a performance is given and showing only the end product rather than the preparatory work that occurred behind the scenes.

A final view of idealization considers the attempt of a performer to behave in a manner that will convey to the

audience that no other performance can be as important as the current one. This view is realized when a performer conveys an impression that a special and unique relationship exists between himself and the audience and when the audience assumes "the character projected before them is all there is to the individual who acts out the projection for them" (Goffman, 1959, p. 48).

Maintenance of expressive control refers to a performer being able to remain in charge of a performance when events happen that contradict the definition of the situation. A performer may project incapacity, impropriety, or disrespect through loss of muscular control. He may act as if he is too much or too little concerned with interaction. The performer may lose control because a setting is not ready or improper timing occurs in the arrival or departure of another performer. Performers who maintain expressive control are expected to "...give a perfectly homogeneous performance at every appointed time" (Goffman, 1959, p. 56).

In observing performances, the audience is interested in determining if the front being maintained before them is real or false. The audience is concerned about whether or not the performer is authorized to give a performance and is not concerned with the performance itself. Those performers who are not authorized to give performances live in fear that they will be found out in an act of misrepresentation. When the audience finds out a routine is false, there arises

doubt and concern about the truthfulness of other activities of the performer.

Certain communication techniques that persons use in misrepresenting the truth without actually telling lies include innuendo, strategic ambiguity, and crucial omissions. Representatives of the media as well as other persons use these techniques to their advantage. Goffman points out that all legitimate vocations engage in concealment and misrepresentation that contradicts the overall impression being maintained by a performer. It is difficult to determine whether a performance is real or false due to the similar care being given to each in creating a desired impression. According to Goffman (1959), we can study "performances that are quite false in order to learn about ones that are quite honest" (p. 66).

In addition to highlighting certain parts of a performance and concealing other matters, a performer finds it necessary to maintain social distance with the audience. By maintaining social distance, the performer is able to project to the audience that he possesses certain mystical qualities and powers that enable his performance to be presented. The truth of the matter is the mystical qualities attributed to the performer would be a source of shame for the performer if he permitted the audience to relate to him in more familiar way.

If a performance is to have influence on others, the audience must perceive the performer as being real, sincere, and honest. In establishing this view, Goffman explains that most persons project their true self as they interact with others; however, there is the possibility that a person could manage to project a contrived appearance.

A contrived appearance can be drawn from familiar routines witnessed by the performer or from honest routines conducted in the past by the performer. Persons are able to manage a routine due to "anticipatory socialization" or recalling past performances for use in a current situation.

In order to express to others the true self, a performer must go beyond a possession of required attributes such as age, sex, territory, and class status. He must also "sustain the standards of conduct and appearance that one's social grouping attaches thereto" (Goffman, 1959, p. 75).

#### Application to Elementary Principal's Role

The seven concepts comprising Goffman's individual performance framework are applicable to the interaction that takes place between an elementary principal and various audiences. A routine day for the elementary principal consists of numerous brief interactions with students, staff, central office personnel, parents, and other community members and agencies. The concepts will be



presented and examples of their application to the role of an elementary principal will follow.

### Fronts

The elementary principal's fronts help in defining the situation for the audience and in creating an expectation of the kind of interaction that will follow the principal's initial contact with the audience. In projecting a definition of the situation, the principal uses both settings and personal fronts to his advantage.

The arrangement of the school setting whether it is the principal's office, a conference room, or any other area, projects to the audience a certain impression of the type of interaction to be held. Also, the type of setting creates an expectation of the one who will be leading the activity.

For example, the principal who sets up two chairs at a table away from his desk to conduct a teacher summative evaluation conference is defining a situation quite different from the principal who sits behind his desk with the employee directly in front of his desk. Also, the physical arrangement of a staff meeting that places the principal behind a podium facing staff members who are seated in rows defines an expectation for the audience that is in sharp contrast to an arrangement allowing staff members and principal to face one another.

The personal fronts of the principal also help to define the situation for the audience. The principal's appearance and manner provide the audience with a way of anticipating how a setting will be defined and the future actions of the principal.

The appearance of the principal may differ depending upon whether school is in session or the activity being conducted. During the school day, the principal is expected to be attired in clothing that will signify a professional stature to the audience. After school hours, on weekends, or during the summer months when staff and students are not present, the principal's attire may reflect a less official dress as he may be at the school to meet police officers who have responded to an alarm, assisting the custodian with replacing a door lock to a storage building, or meeting with a contractor who has begun work on removing asbestos from the school building.

The manner of a principal projects the role that a principal is expected to play in future interaction. Speech patterns, facial expressions, and bodily gestures provide the audience with an expectation that the principal will continue to display the same manner that was characteristic of previous interaction. Principals who possess an aggressive, authoritarian manner might use language and project body gestures that communicate to their audience the importance of their ideas in solving problems. Principals

who have a team orientation reflect a manner that communicates the value of obtaining input from all staff members before attempting to solve a problem.

### Dramatic Realization

In highlighting facts about certain activities that might go unnoticed, a principal organizes and dramatizes activity so that a performance expresses what he wishes to convey. The time spent by the principal in doing a task is so great that little time is left for the principal to mobilize activity to express the qualities and attributes that he possesses that contributed to the success of the task.

In some elementary schools, assistant principals are given the responsibility for performing certain tasks while the principal spends much of his time expressing the significance of the task. This dilemma of "expression versus action" is very real to elementary principals especially since their role has been changed significantly by school reforms requiring greater principal accountability in such areas as teacher evaluation, student achievement, and classroom instruction.

Some principals dramatize the activity of before-school and after-school supervision of students by scheduling time to assist other staff members with students either exiting from or entering cars or buses. There are several

opportunities for the principal to dramatize activity during this supervisory time.

The principal's visibility in assisting staff members with supervision before and after school dramatizes to parents that similar supervision is occurring during the day and their child is in a safe environment. During this time of supervision, the principal is able to talk with supervising teachers about concerns that have developed during the day. Bus drivers will have an opportunity to discuss safety or other problems concerning their bus route. Also, the principal is available for brief interaction with students who are on their way to cars or buses or with a parent who has come to pick up their child.

### Idealization

Principals offer observers an idealized impression by incorporating and exemplifying the accepted values of society. In each interaction, the principal strives to insure that the present performance being conveyed to the audience has great importance and that a special relationship exists between himself and the audience.

An example of idealization involves a principal who sacrifices time spent at the local school to respond in an affirmative manner to a superordinate's request to serve on a county-wide committee. The service on the committee will provide the principal with a closer relationship with

central office personnel and more prestige among his peers. This idealized impression is achieved by delegating or reassigning duties at the local school to other personnel. In order to accomplish this front, the principal will have to relinquish some autonomy at the school level while giving an impression to his superordinates that his job performance at the school is not being affected by his involvement at the county level.

Certain activities which are incompatible with a performance are concealed by the principal so that a front can be maintained. In maintaining a front, the principal must take care to conceal any part that will detract from the overall positive impression he wants the audience to receive.

The amount of work to be accomplished prior to a visit by a regional accrediting team may be so great that the principal becomes involved in helping to spruce up the building to reflect a neat and orderly facility. This work might include the principal working in a custodial capacity alongside other staff members on the weekend prior to the visit to insure that the building is clean, everything is in order, and the school is complying with all facility standards. In this situation, the principal is displaying the end product of a detailed process and has concealed those areas of the accreditation process that are less visible. The impression being fostered by the principal is

that the standard of cleanliness in the school setting has been met and other standards of the accreditation process have not been neglected to achieve this standard.

#### Maintenance of Expressive Control

A principal exercises discipline in making sure he is in charge or control of a performance. Principals lose control of a performance by failing to maintain muscular control, displaying too little or too much concern with interaction, starting a presentation before the setting is ready, and introducing a performer before his scheduled arrival and departure time. These minor accidents create a problem for the audience in determining what is reality and the official projection.

On occasion a principal is contacted by his immediate supervisor to supply information about a parental complaint involving one of his school employees. After presenting the school's viewpoint in the matter, the principal and the supervisor agree that a conference between parent and principal is needed. In order for parent-school reconciliation to occur, the principal will have to maintain a disciplined performance while in the parent's presence. Both his verbal and non-verbal communication will have to reflect an interest in resolving the problem. If the principal projects an image that the parent's concern is insignificant or if he overreacts to the concern by being

too supportive of the employee, there is a chance that the conflict between the parent and the school will not be resolved during that conference.

In another situation, the principal decides to go ahead with the scheduled field day as the weather forecast had indicated only a slight chance of precipitation for the day. Within an hour there is a small amount of rain and the principal decides for safety reasons to suspend field day activities. He informs staff members and students of grades 4 through 6 of his decision and requests that they return to their classrooms. He then moves to a nearby playground where grades 1 through 3 field day activities were being held and announces that activities for these students are being suspended. Upon receiving the news of the suspension of field day activities, the teacher-coordinator for these grades requested that their field day be allowed to continue as their events were almost over and would be finished in about 15 minutes. The teacher coordinator argued that several parents had taken time off from work to be a part of this day and she felt it would be safe enough to continue. After additional discussion with the teacher-coordinator, the principal lost control and projected an impression that was in conflict with previous ones.

Due to a minor oversight, the principal had failed to prepare his staff on the procedures to follow in the event of rain. The setting had not been put in order. Through

his loss of control, he had caused others to view him as a person different from his usual self.

### Misrepresentation

In the daily routine of an elementary school principal, there are certain parts of a performance that can not be treated openly. Both false and sincere performances require much attention to create a desired impression. The principal must be alert to presenting anything that will contradict the established projection.

A principal can engage in misrepresentation by the way he explains to parents his rationale for routing a particular bus to school each morning. For example, the principal schedules students from a particular development to be picked up at 7:15 a.m. each morning. When parents complain about their children having early morning pickup every year, the principal responds by telling parents that a fewer number of cars are on the main road that turns off into their housing development at that time of day. He further explains that if these students were picked up any later, the bus driver upon returning to the main road from the housing development would find it difficult to gain accesss onto the main road because of the increased traffic. The reasons given by the principal are true and valid; however, another reason for routing the bus for early arrival at the school focuses on the fact that students from



this particular housing development are well behaved and will cause less discipline problems for the staff members who will be supervising them for ten or fifteen minutes prior to the opening of school.

Another principal found it necessary to conceal a portion of his performance during an interview with a prospective teacher assistant. The principal was very careful in responding to questions about the teacher who would be supervising the teacher assistant. The teacher who would be assigned the new assistant had stated to the principal on several occasions that she did not want an assistant. The teacher was an excellent instructor but had experienced little success in relating to previous teacher assistants. The principal's verbal and non-verbal responses to questions about the teacher had to be presented in a disciplined manner.

### Mystification

There are advantages to a principal maintaining social distance or limiting his contact with the audience. In most elementary schools, there is a teacher who serves as an "informal" leader or representative for the instructional staff. This person is given ample time to express staff concerns to the principal while others have limited contact with the principal. Principals who are concerned about

staff morale and other concerns find the time to interact with informal leaders on a regular basis.

In these interactions, there is opportunity for the informal leader to observe principal activity that is inconsistent with previous performances. In observing the principal from a nearby position over a period of time, the informal leader finds out that the mystery behind the principal's performance is not really a mystery at all.

### Reality and Contrivance

The principal must work to project an image of sincerity in his daily routine. Any interaction that gives an appearance of being contrived can reduce or destroy the influence of the principal.

In a school fundraiser, the parent teacher organization decides to raffle a color television and present a small black and white television to the student selling the most raffle tickets. Two students in the school were trying very hard to win the small television. On the day before the contest was to end, a teacher told a student that her ticket sales placed her in an excellent position to win the small television. On the next day within thirty minutes of the established deadline of 12:00 noon, the parent of the student with the second best ticket sales appeared at school and turned over an amount of money exceeding the total amount turned in by the student who was ahead in sales on

the previous day. The principal asked the secretary to detain a teacher and the cafeteria manager who had just entered the office. Both of these persons served as witnesses to the fact that this parent had arrived before 12:00 noon. The secretary gave to the parent a receipt for the money. Also, the principal had the secretary write on the bank deposit slip the amount of money in the total deposit received from this parent. The bank was closing at 12:00 noon on this day and the principal hurried to the bank to make the deposit. The teller honored the principal's request to write the time of day on the deposit slip.

Before the school day had ended, the parent whose daughter had placed second in the contest telephoned the principal and wanted to know why her child had not won the television. The principal tried to explain to the parent what had happened but the parent refused to listen and accused the principal of allowing the other parent to submit money after the deadline. Before the discussion ended, the principal was able to schedule a conference with the parent for the next morning.

In the conference, the principal shared with the parent the events of the previous day, offered to present witnesses, and invited the parent to accompany him to the bank to make a visual check of the bank deposit slip. The parent accepted the explanation of the principal and apologized for her accusations.

The principal in this situation was able to project an impression to this parent that he was a trustworthy and sincere person. Much of the success of the principal's performance in this situation can be attributed to his being a keen observer of a situation that had occurred several years earlier. While working as an assistant principal, he observed a principal present a successful routine in a similar situation. The routine was remembered and eventually applied to his situation.

#### Revised Framework for the Elementary Principal as Performer

Earlier in this chapter, the concepts of Goffman's individual performances framework were presented along with their application to the role of an elementary principal. In Chapter II, Sarason's creation of settings framework and literature on the principal as culture builder were presented.

In this section, the concepts of Goffman and Sarason will be used to develop a revised framework for the elementary principal as performer. The framework will include a explanation of concepts and a clarification of relationships. The following concepts will comprise the framework: (1) anticipatory socialization, (2) confronting history, and (3) three phases of socialization. The concepts of confronting history and socialization will be

combined in Chapter IV when the framework is applied to the performances of the writer and observations of performances of other principals.

#### Anticipatory Socialization

The process of socialization or the interaction of an individual with certain audiences has implications for the performances of a principal when he exerts leadership in a new setting. The socialization process of a principal in its earliest stages considers both individual performances and observations of performances by other elementary principals.

While the presentation is being given, an aspiring principal observes audience reaction to the way he is defining the situation. This careful attention to cues from the audience will enable the individual to adjust his performance so that the intended impression can be maintained. As an observer of other principals, the aspiring principal assesses and commits their performances to memory anticipating the day when he will face similar encounters with audiences.

When a person achieves status as a principal, he will be prepared to perform in certain situations with confidence. This confidence can be attributed to his familiarity with a past history of successful performances given by himself or others.

### Confronting History

This portion of the revised framework will consider a person who has been promoted recently to an elementary principal position or an existing principal who has begun work in another elementary school setting. Before a principal begins to initiate any changes in the existing school setting, it is important that he examine the historical aspects of the setting and utilize the knowledge obtained to decide on the future direction for the school. A principal confronts the history of a school setting by acquiring knowledge of the setting, understanding the structured relationships that are found within the setting, and identifying the setting's relationship to other settings.

In acquiring knowledge of the school setting, the principal seeks to determine information on school traditions, values, rituals, stories, ceremonies, and heroes. The principal attempts to obtain information on past sources of conflict and determine if the performances of a former principal created any of the conflict. Other historical information sought by the new principal includes the commitment of the staff to existing goals of the school, the procedures for allocating resources, the informal network in the school, the decision-making process, the procedures of governance, and the process whereby staff

members are able to grow professionally while maintaining quality service to students.

In confronting history, the elementary principal has to be cognizant of how structured relationships have influenced the creation and operation of a school setting. The previous interactions between principal and core group members and the existing relationships within the core group provide valuable information for a beginning or new principal. The extent of parent and community involvement in the school setting provides additional information on what will be expected of the new leader in communicating school programs and activities to the community. Information on past principal's performances with certified and non-certified staff members can be obtained to determine how relationships with these personnel might be improved.

A final area where the new principal confronts history focuses on his relationships with settings outside the school setting. The principal engages in a large number of interactions with personnel from state instructional offices, regional accrediting agencies, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, and federal agencies. Local interactions of the principal include representatives with the school central office, health department, social services, media, community agencies, religious community, service organizations, and various businesses in the community. The new principal needs to be

aware that external organizations' demands for time and resources of school personnel will be a continual process.

### Three Phases of Socialization

In addition to paying attention to the history of a setting, the principal can benefit from an awareness of the socialization process he will encounter in his relationships with members of the core group in his setting or with persons in other settings. The writer has created three concepts from the Goffman and Sarason frameworks that can be applied to the socialization process of a principal. These concepts are explained in terms of how the principal views reality from the time of his selection as leader of a school until he becomes a sincere, disciplined performer.

The beginning principal's performances are characterized by disregard for the reality of a situation (Phase I). Later, the principal engages in presentations that demonstrate he has confronted the reality of the situation and has begun to address the problems in the setting (Phase II). A final concept involves the principal being able to present reality in such a convincing way that he is considered to be a sincere and honest performer (Phase III). The following statements listed under each concept describe the actions of principals during that part of the socialization process:



Confronting History and Socialization - Disregarding Reality:Phase I

1. The principal fails to confront the history of the setting.
2. The principal attends to personal needs at the expense of meeting core group members' needs.
3. The principal is overwhelmed by his personal sense of superiority.
4. The principal ignores the development of a governance procedure for the setting and the issue of limited resources.
5. The principal and core group members are unable to reach agreement on ideas and values for the setting.
6. The principal gives greater attention to the beneficiaries of a setting and neglects core group members' needs for autonomy and professional development.

Confronting History and Socialization - Confronting Reality:Phase II

1. The principal demonstrates concern for core group members' needs.

2. The principal displays a compromising nature in working with core group members.
3. The principal is concerned about reaching agreement on ideas and values for the setting.
4. The principal develops governance procedures including priorities on how resources will be distributed in the setting.
5. The principal reacts to cues from staff during his presentations.
6. The principal is aware of his dependency on team members.

Confronting History and Socialization - Presenting Reality:

Phase III

Throughout the socialization process of a principal, the principal has many opportunities to assess how well his performances are conveying the intended message. By giving attention to presentations or being dramaturgically aware of verbal and non-verbal expressions during performances, the principal is able to make necessary adjustments so that he will project a sincere and authentic self to his audience. The following guidelines can be used by the principal as

performer in defining the situation in a way that influences others:

1. The principal is familiar with the routine and can move from an informal situation to a formal situation with ease.
2. The principal is able to dramatize intended messages.
3. The principal maintains certain standards of conduct and self control.
4. The principal reacts to disruptive events without threatening the definition of the situation.
5. The principal projects an impression that he is authorized to give a performance.
6. The principal projects honesty and sincerity in his presentations.

### Summary

The beginning part of this chapter contained a review of Goffman's individual performance framework. The concepts in his framework consisted of the following: fronts, dramatic realization, idealization, maintenance of expressive control, misrepresentation, mystification, and

reality and contrivance. Next, the concepts were applied to the role of an elementary school principal as performer. The final part of the chapter presented a revised performance framework for the elementary principal. This framework included the concepts of anticipatory socialization, the history of the setting, and the socialization process of the principal.

## CHAPTER IV

### APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

The elementary principal performance framework of Chapter III consisted of a review of Goffman's individual performances concepts and their application to the role of an elementary principal. The final part of the chapter presented a revised performance framework for the elementary principal that included the concepts of Goffman and Sarason.

This chapter will consist of an application of the revised framework using selected case studies describing performances of the writer as a principal and observations of other principals engaged in performances. The application of the framework will cover a period of seventeen years beginning with the writer's observation of a principal as a student teacher and ending with eleven years of performances as an elementary principal. The concepts relating to confronting history and the three phases of socialization will be combined when the framework is applied to the performances of the writer as principal.

In the methodology section of chapter I, the writer indicated that the first person singular form would be used in this chapter. The "I" form will enable the writer to

interact with what is being expressed in the various case studies.

#### Student Teaching Experience (Spring, 1966)

My initial interaction with a school principal in a professional capacity occurred in the Spring of 1966. I had completed the required education courses and had begun observation of the teacher that would be my mentor during the upcoming six week student teaching experience. My student teaching assignment would be in a junior high school not too far from the college campus.

Upon arriving at the junior high school for the first time, my supervising teacher gave me a tour of the campus and introduced me to several members of the staff. During the tour, I was able to visit briefly with the principal in his office.

The office was highly organized and there were several items in the room that indicated the personal interests of the principal. The orderliness of the office gave me the impression that the principal was efficient and prepared for the next challenge.

The principal's overall appearance reflected what I expected from a person who was the leader of a school. His suit, tie, and shirt were neat and free from wrinkles. His shoes were clean and well polished. His facial appearance

indicated he had shaved that morning and his hair was well groomed.

I recall the interaction with the principal being brief but interesting. The principal welcomed me to the school and praised my supervising teacher as an outstanding person and educator. Before I left his office, he offered to assist me as I began working with students in the school.

Looking back on this brief interaction, I was made to feel as if the time I was spending with the principal was the most important activity that the principal could be engaging in at that time. The message conveyed to me by the principal was that my student teaching experience was extremely important and his main goal was to help me to achieve success during this experience.

#### First Year of Teaching (1966-67)

After graduating from college in the spring of 1966, I was offered a contract to teach sixth grade in a school located in northern Virginia. I was somewhat familiar with this school as I had spent the summer of 1965 playing semi-pro baseball in the town where the school was located. The principal of the school was a member of the baseball team. He had invited another member of the team and me to live with his family for the summer. Being impressed with the principal and his philosophy, I signed the contract and moved from my home in North Carolina to this new area.

When I reported for the new school year, I found a new principal had been assigned to the school. The former principal had taken a similar position in another part of the state. The new principal was in his initial year of administration. His prior experience in education was in teaching and coaching.

My initial interaction with the principal was in sharp contrast with the principal I had observed during my student teaching experience. The first meeting of the school year consisted of a brief welcome and a distribution of forms to be completed for the county central office. There was no orientation or offer to assist the new staff members of the school. I obtained information about the school from staff members who were located near my classroom.

During the early part of the school year, I was confronted by a parent who entered my classroom shouting obscenities and indicating she was going to take care of the person who had hurt her son. I was able to get the parent to go to the hallway outside the classroom to discuss her concern.

The parent stated that she was told by the principal that he had no knowledge of the situation and she could come to my classroom to discuss the matter. The parent was upset over a playground incident involving her son on the previous day. Her son had stated that I had struck him about the chest while he was involved in warm-up exercises prior to



physical activity. She explained further that she had taken her son to the doctor who acknowledged that there were some bruises on his chest. I explained to the parent that her son and two other students were disrupting the class and I had required them to do fifteen extra push-ups before they joined the rest of the class in the scheduled activity. I told the parent that the soreness in her son's chest was probably due to his extra efforts in completing the push-ups and that the condition would not be permanent. The parent rejected my explanation. I offered to schedule another time to discuss the matter further. When the parent refused this offer, I asked her to leave the building as I had to return to my class. The parent left the building but not before she had disrupted other classes with boisterous shouts indicating her desire to avenge the assault on her son.

Through further investigative work on my part, I found out the student had been involved in a fight with another student on the way home from school and the bruises on his chest were a result of that incident. The student was afraid to tell his mother about the fight and made up a story about what had happened and related it to his grandmother. By the time the mother had arrived home from work, the story had been distorted greatly to include the allegations of my striking the student about the chest. I shared this information with the principal and called the parent and told her the facts behind the event.

Also, I met with the principal to express my concern over his sending the parent to my class in such an angry state of mind. He appeared disinterested and gave no indication that he supported me or was pleased with the final outcome. The principal's non-verbal behavior indicated to me that he was not interested in further discussion and I was wasting time by bringing the matter to his attention.

It is difficult for me to give a fair assessment of this principal's performances. With the exception of the preceding incident, I saw the principal only at staff meetings and a few times during lunch period. He observed my teaching only once during the year. I was not given any feedback on my instruction during the time he spent in my classroom.

### Anticipatory Socialization (1967-72)

#### Second Year of Teaching (1967-68)

After my initial year of teaching, I accepted an eighth grade teaching assignment in a junior high school in the southern piedmont section of North Carolina. It was during the 1967-68 school year that I finalized plans to enroll in graduate school and obtain certification in school administration. Also, I found myself observing the

principal more intently and trying to identify factors that were contributing to successful performances.

The principal of this school expected the best from his staff and was very masterful in defining the situation in interaction with staff, students, and parents. He held several orientation sessions with new staff members and made himself available to discuss their concerns.

The school had a strong culture and the principal contributed significantly to a sense of family. The principal's office contained group pictures of previous faculties for the past several years. He would often share an interesting story involving an existing staff member or one who had worked there in the past. He would walk over to the group picture, point to a particular person, and share something unique about the person's contribution to the school.

In parent conferences, the principal would listen to the parent's problem, recognize the teacher for input, and then give an impressive presentation of the problem as he viewed it from a neutral perspective. The principal's knowledge of the community enabled him to share with the complaining parent a positive experience involving their child or other children in that family. These brief anecdotes placed the principal in advantageous position. By defining the situation as being positive at the beginning of the conference, he was able to control the conduct of the

complaining parent. Most of the time parents left the conference in a good mood and expressing thanks to the principal for his willingness to listen. He gave support to the teacher without rejecting what the parent had to say. Through non-verbal behavior, he indicated to the parent that he was interested in solving the problem.

#### First year of Administrative Experience (1968-69)

In following through with my desire to become a school administrator, I returned to another northern county in Virginia to work as an assistant principal for a grades 5-6 elementary school. From this location, I was able to attend graduate classes in school administration at a nearby university.

This experience gave me another valuable opportunity to observe a principal as he performed before various audiences. The principal of this setting possessed excellent writing skills and would spend many hours drafting letters to the superintendent or the board of education requesting changes in the curriculum, board policy, or additional funds for the operation of the school.

Other than some discipline and bus duty assignments, I was given limited responsibility in the daily operation of the school. The principal explained to me that he was responsible for everything in the school and he could not delegate too much or else he would lose touch with what was

going on in the school. At the time I could not understand his position, but in retrospect I realized that the principal had never been assigned an assistant principal before and it must have been difficult to delegate to me those duties that he had been doing by himself for several years.

Although I obtained little administrative experience, during this school year, I was able to observe most of the staff in interaction with students, parents, and colleagues. These observations enabled me to obtain a wealth of instructional methods that I could recall and use during the next three years.

#### Return to Teaching (1969-72)

After my first year of administrative experience, I was offered a position in the Fall of 1969 to work in this same county as an assistant principal in a junior high school. The county school board through reorganization split the fifth and sixth grade school where I was working and made it a Grade 5 school. The existing junior high facility became a sixth grade school. The junior high school moved into the old high school. The senior high staff transferred to a new facility. I declined the offer as my intentions were to finish my graduate degree and return to North Carolina to the county where I had been employed prior to going to Virginia. Also, I realized a need for additional classroom

experience. I accepted a position to teach fifth grade students in the school where I had served the past year as an assistant principal.

The principal of the school for this school year had been the assistant principal of the junior high the preceding year. The principal that had been my mentor the year before was appointed principal of the Grade 6 school. Both the fifth grade and sixth grade schools would not have assistant principals during the upcoming school year.

In his initial year, this principal proved to be an impressive performer. In staff meetings, the meeting room was arranged to reflect the importance of staff members being able to share and discuss problems face to face. The agenda for each meeting included a time for staff members to share information about their classes, successes, and any pertinent research gleaned from their professional readings. The principal was an avid reader. He often would share current research and other journal articles that would stimulate our thinking.

The principal was an excellent planner and organizer. He was called on to chair countywide committees and contributed heavily to staff development activities for instructional and administrative personnel. The staff responded collectively and individually to his efforts to improve instruction in the school.

An atmosphere of trust and teamwork existed in his daily interactions with staff members. He encouraged all staff members to engage in personal improvement and made the staff aware of local and regional workshops and courses.

After the 1969-70 school year, I returned to North Carolina to the same school system where I had worked prior to returning to Virginia. My teaching assignment for the next two years would be sixth grade in a grades K-6 school. I was able to obtain some additional administrative experience during this time as I served as an "unofficial" assistant principal when the principal was away from the building for workshops, conferences, and meetings.

The principal of this school was an outstanding performer. My observations of this person gave me valuable insight to the meaning that is conveyed to others through non-verbal communication.

The principal's vision for the school and his commitment to students was defined more through action than words. He involved the entire staff in planning goals and assessing student progress. During committee meetings, each person was encouraged to share their ideas in an attempt to find the best solution to problems. There was excellent community support for this school and many parents served as volunteers for various school activities.

In my close observations of these three principals during the 1968-72 school years, I became familiar with

performances that would be helpful to me once I achieved status as principal. Each of the three men had an influence on me but the most significant influence came from the one who was my mentor at the time I was appointed principal. His intense involvement portrayed a commitment and sincerity that I wanted to emulate.

### Confronting History and Socialization - Disregarding Reality:

#### Phase I (1972-77)

In late Spring of 1972, I was appointed as principal of a grades 5-6 school. The former principal had retired after serving as principal of this school for thirty-one years.

During the summer of 1972, I spent a lot of time reviewing school board policy, local school procedures, existing personnel guidelines, and preparing for the opening of school. Also, I worked as director of a six week federal reading program at a K-4 school for five hours a day. The K-4 school was four blocks from the school where I had been appointed principal. The principal of the K-4 school where I directed the summer reading program served as a capable mentor as he shared with me valuable information about the students I would be receiving from his school, the community, parents, and the previous working relationship between the two schools.



I began the school year with a detailed agenda for the first staff meeting. In covering the agenda items, I conveyed some impressions to the staff that were unintended. After the meeting, one of the fifth grade veteran teachers approached me and told me that I had "lost" the staff. I asked her what she meant by her statement. She told me that the meeting was very organized but that during the meeting the staff had received an impression quite different from the verbal presentation I had communicated. My first thoughts upon hearing her comments was to reject her as a complainer who would become a constant problem for me during the coming year. I thanked her for sharing her concern with me but inwardly I felt resentment. I wanted to tell her that I would "run the show" and she could stick to teaching fifth grade rather than being a critic of the way I conducted staff meetings.

The next day I approached this teacher and arranged to meet with her at the end of the day. In this brief interaction, I told the teacher that I had spent time reflecting on what she had said and I wanted more specific information on what I had done to lose the staff. When the meeting began, the teacher stated that she would be retiring in a couple of years and was not wanting to tell me how to conduct staff meetings nor was she wanting to create problems for me. She just wanted to be honest with me and make me aware of the impression I was giving to the staff.

The teacher shared with me that I had projected to the staff an authoritarian attitude and had reflected a determination to begin a major overhaul of the existing practices and programs in the school. Also, she stated that the staff was concerned because I had not acknowledged one positive aspect of the school during my initial meeting with them.

I thanked the teacher again for her honesty in sharing the impression I had given to the staff. My attitude of resentment towards the teacher had changed to one of gratitude. I was determined to project a better image of myself in future meetings.

After the next staff meeting, this same teacher approached me and stated that I had "won" the staff back and had been consistent in matching verbal statements with body language. Through this fifth grade teacher's concern for my performances, I was able to receive an honest assessment of how well I was conveying intended messages to the staff during scheduled meetings.

As I assessed my performances during the first couple of years in this school, I realized my failure in confronting the reality of the situation. My personal sense of superiority in this leadership position had overshadowed any need to give attention to the needs of staff members. In developing governance procedures for the school, I had assumed that my ideas would be confirmed without any dissent. I had obtained information about the school where

I would be working from the principal of the K-4 school located nearby but I had not taken the time to discuss the values, ideas, and goals of the staff members. The existing goals and ideas of the staff, available resources and their allocation, and staff development needs were not discussed with the staff.

In my presentation before the staff, I expressed what needed to be done for students. I had not considered the structured relationships that existed in the school and the needs of those who were working in the setting. Committees were established without my receiving input from staff members. The community was given little information on the goals for the school year. I had underestimated the amount of time that other settings would be demanding from the school. In summary, I had disregarded the reality of the situation and my performances had no significant influence on those who were my audiences during this period of time. After my second year in this school, I began efforts to confront the reality of the situation and to improve my participation in individual and team performances.

#### Confronting History and Socialization - Confronting Reality:

##### Phase II (1977-78)

My next principal assignment was in a grades 3-6 school. The grades 5-6 school I had been working in for the

past five years was scheduled to be razed so the local board of education built a new facility for K-2 students and converted the existing K-4 building into a grades 3-6 facility. In this new setting, I would be facing the challenge of blending an existing staff of grades 5-6 teachers with the third and fourth grade teachers who remained at the grades 3-6 site. Another challenge involved my demonstrating to the third and fourth grade teachers the importance of their input in deciding on goals for the coming year.

In this experience, I was able to put forth a better effort in confronting the history of the setting. The five years that I had spent in the community, the involvement with the Grades K-6 parent-teacher association, and the day to day coordination with the principal of the K-4 school enabled me to be prepared for the transition involving these two staffs.

Before the school year ended in the spring of 1977, I scheduled a meeting with the third and fourth grade staff to discuss plans for the coming year. In this meeting, governance procedures, existing programs, and areas needing improvement were discussed. Staff members were assured that they would be involved in the decision making processes affecting curriculum, representation on school committees, and purchase of materials and equipment.

One incident during the first nine weeks that required my immediate attention involved a third grade staff member, the entire staff, the community, and the citizens of our county. A third grade student finished breakfast one morning in the school cafeteria just as the first bell had rung indicating it was time for students to report to their classrooms. The student's classroom was just a short distance away. The teachers on duty dismissed the students and watched them as they walked to their classrooms. All the students reported to their room except the third grade student. Some of the students told a teacher on duty that they had seen the student arrive at school with his father and leave with his mother after breakfast. We called the father who had custody of the child and notified him that his child had not reported to his classroom after breakfast and some children had seen him leave the school in his mother's car. The father became upset and stated he was coming by the school to verify what we had told him over the phone. When he arrived at school, the student's teacher and I shared the same information with the parent. We explained to the father that it was impossible for us to walk every student to their classroom in the morning and it appeared that the student had made prior arrangements with the mother to leave the cafeteria after breakfast and come to a designated pickup point.

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The father left the school upset and threatening to take action against the school for improper supervision of his child. He called the local newspaper and reported his concern. A newspaper reporter called the school and I responded to questions about the incident.

The news article that was printed gave the impression our school was negligent in supervising students before and after school. The reporter had failed to indicate that five staff members were on duty each morning and afternoon to insure student safety during arrival and departure times.

The third grade teacher who was assisting with cafeteria duty on the morning of the incident was very upset that the newspaper had given an ambiguous account of what had happened. She felt her professional image and the reputation of the school had been damaged by the article. The entire staff united in support of the third grade teacher identified as the person who was responsible for allowing the student to leave the school grounds.

I knew that a quick response was needed to refute this claim against the teacher and the school. My immediate action was to define the situation to the staff, parents, community, and other citizens that the alleged claims of improper supervision were untrue. I met with grade level representatives including the third grade teacher who had received the criticism to discuss plans for addressing the negative publicity we had received. Our plan involved my

writing a letter to the editor stating the facts of the situation. Each staff member would be given an opportunity to sign the letter. Next, selected staff members and I would meet with school advisory committee members and PTA executive officers to reassure the community that quality supervision of students was a high priority of our staff not only before and after school but during the instructional day. Staff members who lived in the community were encouraged to share the facts of the incident with neighbors, club members, church members, and other citizens.

By quickly defining the situation, I had shown to the staff my support for the teacher and the school. The community was very supportive of the teacher, the administration, and other staff members. The incident was negative in the sense of the publicity we received; however, there was a positive outcome as the total school and community united in an effort to dispel the image created by the news article.

While serving as principal of this school, I continued to confront reality and recognize the limitations I was placing on myself and others. I became aware of the importance of compromise in working with staff members.

The significance of obtaining ideas from the staff in matters of governance and agreement on goals and values for the setting became greater priorities as I gained more experience as a principal. When we were faced with the

negative news article, I relied on the staff for ideas to help in refuting the claims against our school. Their ideas and performances in this situation underscored the need for me to be more dependent on staff members and to find ways to engage in more team performances. Instead of being independent and dramatically dominant, I encouraged staff members to direct certain performances while I served in more supportive and ceremonial roles.

#### Confronting History and Socialization - Presenting Reality:

##### Phase III (1978-83)

After serving one year in the grades 3-6 school, I was appointed principal of a school with K-6 students in 1978. During the five years that I worked in this school, I felt I became a more disciplined performer. When comparing my performances in previous principal positions, I was able to project the reality of a situation and communicate much better. My years as principal at this school would prove to be a very positive experience for me.

As I reviewed the history of the school, I discovered that there had been only three principals since 1927 and the principal I was replacing had served nine years. All previous principals were highly respected by students, teachers, and the community. The last principal was very personable and projected a genuine concern for children.



His involvement in helping students and efforts in supporting the staff in improving the curriculum were commendable. He displayed a great sense of humor and was respected by his peers and the central office.

The school was located in a textile community. Approximately ninety percent of the students had one or both parents who worked in the local factories. Two textile firms owned the factories and provided houses for a large number of their employees. After completing sixth grade, students from this school were assigned to three junior high schools. These same students would be assigned to two senior high schools for grades 10 -12.

The school possessed a rich heritage and the staff made sure new employees were given an orientation that highlighted the traditions of the school. New staff members were made to feel a part of the staff their first day in the school. An atmosphere of care and concern for each staff member prevailed.

It was evident that staff members were used to being involved in decisions that would affect their day to day routine. A positive "we can do it" attitude was evident in their relationships with each other and in working to meet student needs.

The two case studies that follow will relate to my becoming a more disciplined performer in interaction with others. The intent of these case studies is to demonstrate

how I presented the definition of the situation in a manner that reflects the reality of the setting.

One of the first problems that I encountered as principal of this school involved the staff's previous adoption of a nationally validated reading management system. The staff of this school had adopted this system almost four years before I became principal. The central office had supported the school with funds for staff development and materials. Staff members had been given extensive training in the implementation and maintenance of the system. They were confident that the system was appropriate and meeting the needs of the students in our school.

The significance of my learning about this reading management system related in a meaningful way to my performances as principal of this school. I realized that I would need to be knowledgeable of this management system if I was going to have any influence on the instructional program of the school.

Prior to understanding this system, I spoke in general terms of my support for its continued use in the school. These formal statements of support were hiding my lack of specific knowledge about the system. In followup meetings, I became aware that my non-verbal behavior had given me away and the staff was not impressed with my attempts to communicate with them about this management system. By

asking questions of staff members and participation in a workshop by the developers of the system, I was able to become knowledgeable of the management system. Also, the staff gave me more credibility as I was able to understand the system and discuss in detail some ways to improve its application in our school.

After serving as principal in this school for a year, I realized that the use of the reading management system was helping the staff to meet the instructional needs of students. Recent achievement test scores in reading indicated students were at or above expected levels when the entire grade level was considered. I sought a way to affirm the staff for their quality instruction as I had some teachers express to me a concern that their Spring, 1979 student test scores were lower than they had expected.

During the summer of 1979, I obtained the reading test reports for the past three years and scheduled some time to compare the results for each grade level. The results agreed with my original assessment of how well students were progressing in the school. Our school average mental maturity score for grades three and six was six points below the average for our county; however, reading achievement for these two grade levels was equal to the county average or above.

My next step was to design a format that would give a visual display of how well our students were progressing

over the three year period in all of the student subtest areas. The report was prepared and copies were made for each staff member.

At the first meeting of the year, I spent some time discussing the results of the three year assessment and fielding questions from teachers about the scores. I related to the staff that they were meeting the needs of students and that their instructional efforts were on target as evidenced by the consistency reflected in the test scores. After this initial meeting, we scheduled additional meetings to identify subtest areas needing more attention in daily instruction.

A second problem that I faced during my tenure as principal of this school involved the staff's strong tradition of meeting the social needs of students. I had never worked in a setting where a staff placed so much emphasis on meeting the physical and social needs of students. The assistant principal served as the contact person in the school for obtaining clothing for students. A clothes closet was housed in the basement of one of our school buildings and stocked with a variety of clothing for elementary age students. In conversation with staff members, I realized that my performances would need to convey a caring attitude and attention to meeting social as well as academic needs of students.

Many of the students of this school faced home or community problems. Our staff had to react to these problems on a daily basis before instruction could begin. When compared with other schools where I served as principal, I would be required to perform in a different manner. On many occasions, parents reported for work so early in the morning that some students did not receive any breakfast. When this happened, a staff member would take these students by the cafeteria before school for breakfast. Other students would be left at the school around 7:15 a.m. to await the arrival of school personnel. The cafeteria manager would let them in the cafeteria to await the staff members on early duty. On rainy days we would have students arriving at school soaking wet. They lived too close to school to ride a bus and their parents had to report to work so early that they could not bring them to school at the regular time. We kept a hair dryer in the office and maintained a clothes dryer in one of the boiler rooms for use by these children. Staff members would take students to a local department store for shoes or other clothing that was unavailable in the clothes closet.

I recall three boys who attended this school who faced a special hardship. Their mother had deserted them and moved away to another state. The father was trying to keep the family together but was not having too much success. I would usually greet these boys as they approached the school

each morning. They walked a distance of about three blocks to school each day. Each day was a struggle for these students. The youngest child would come to school with his shoes on the wrong feet wearing only one sock. The middle child would be wearing a thin tee shirt even on days when the temperature was below freezing. The oldest child would have on a regular shirt but half the buttons would be missing. These boys enjoyed school and rarely missed a day. They would always greet staff members with a smile.

The teacher of the oldest boy decided to do something special for him on his birthday. The teacher purchased a bicycle to give to him on his special day. Prior to this day, I had received two invitations asking that I be present for this event. After school had been dismissed on his birthday, grade level teachers, assistants, and I gathered to watch as the boy received the gift from his teacher. The smile on this boy's face and the hug he gave his teacher expressed far better than words his feelings at that moment.

The teacher was dominant in this performance and my involvement was ceremonial in nature. In my five years as principal of this school, I was called on several times to perform as a team member in a similar manner and demonstrate a special concern for indigent students in the school.

During my tenure as principal in this school, I was able to present the reality of the situation by expressing a more sincere and honest impression in interaction with staff

members. In acquiring more knowledge of the reading management system, I felt at ease and could be more informal in discussing various aspects of the system with staff members. My confidence in the knowledge I had obtained about the system was reflected in non-verbal expressions that helped to dramatize a message that I was authorized to give the performance.

In meeting the social needs of students, I had to accept the fact that the staff expected me to demonstrate a caring attitude when students needing breakfast or dry clothes arrived at school after the tardy bell had rung. I shared their interests in meeting the social needs of these students even though I was concerned about the amount of time being taken from the instructional day. I had to be careful that I did not threaten the definition of the situation by conveying a message to the staff that I was not concerned about the social needs of our students.

### Summary

This chapter has presented an application of the framework of an elementary school principal as performer. Case studies of my experiences as a principal and observations of principals who served as a mentor to me have been presented. The framework was divided into three main concepts of anticipatory socialization, confronting history, and the socialization of the principal. In applying the

framework, the concepts of confronting history and socialization were combined into three phases that covered a particular period of time that I spent as an elementary principal. These three phases were subtitled as disregarding reality, confronting reality, and presenting reality.



## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Past theories of leadership have focused on the style, traits, and behavior of leaders and the situational factors that confront the leader of a particular organization. These theories have been applied to many organizations including the school setting.

In recent years, research has identified the school principal as the key to an effective school. In an effective school, the principal manages to create a culture characterized by instructional leadership, an apparent instructional focus, high expectations for students and staff, and a system for measuring student achievement.

This dissertation has probed beneath the visible correlates of an effective school to examine elementary school leadership through principal performances or the activities of principals that have some influence on others. The concepts of Erving Goffman and Seymour Sarason were used to create a revised framework of the elementary school principal as performer. The intent of the dissertation was to provide additional meaning to elementary school leadership by analyzing how a principal can become a more authentic and honest performer before various audiences.

The methodology for the dissertation included the concepts of subjective understanding and interpretation (Sergiovanni), portraiture (Lightfoot), artistic research (Eisner), case study method (Stake), and sharing one's personal history (Brubaker). In applying these qualitative research concepts, the writer sought to utilize an approach that would allow for personal interaction with what was being expressed.

Goffman's book, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959) was reviewed as was Sarason's The Creation of Settings in Future Societies (1972). Additional literature on the principal as effective leader and culture builder was presented in the review.

Goffman's framework was explained by individual and team performances, regions, discrepant roles, communication out of character, and the arts of impression management. One of the main ideas of this framework focused on a person's ability to maintain a definition of the situation in the presence of varied disruptions during a performance.

Sarason's framework emphasized the leader's role in confronting the history of the setting. Also, the framework included a need for the leader to work with others in the setting to decide on governance issues, to be aware of problems that might emerge in the process of forming a core group, to expect limited resources for accomplishing goals,

and to be cognizant of a personal socialization process involving both internal and external factors.

The literature on the principal as effective leader and culture builder contained key factors of effective principals, the importance of the principal having a vision for the school, and the cultural aspects of leadership. Principals who are culture builders promote those aspects that can give meaning to the school setting such as celebration of heroes, rituals, ceremonies, and stories.

After a review of literature, Goffman's individual performances framework was presented. The concepts of fronts, dramatic realization, idealization, maintenance of expressive control, misrepresentation, mystification, and reality and contrivance were discussed in detail and applied to the role of an elementary principal. Next, a revised framework combining the concepts of Goffman, Sarason, and the writer was presented. The concepts were defined and their relationship to principals' performances was clarified.

Finally, the revised framework was applied to a portion of the writer's career beginning with student teaching and concluding with eleven years as an elementary school principal. The application of the framework included the performances of principals who served as mentors to the writer and the performances of the writer as principal.

### Conclusions

The importance of this study is found in the creation of a framework for analyzing the performances of elementary principals. The framework considers the principal's socialization process and efforts in confronting the history of the setting from the time of his first appointment as principal to a time when he is confident of his ability to influence others through disciplined performances. The writer concludes that a principal's performances can have a significant influence on various audiences. The principal is able to present the reality of a situation by accomplishing the following:

1. Being familiar with the routine so that he can move from an informal to an informal situation with ease.
2. Dramatizing intended messages.
3. Maintaining certain standards of conduct and self control.
4. Reacting to disruptive events without threatening the definition of the situation.
5. Giving an impression that he is authorized to give a performance.
6. Projecting honesty and sincerity in various presentations.

### Recommendations for Further Study

In this dissertation, a revised framework for the elementary principal as performer was presented. The framework combined the concepts of Goffman and Sarason and included the observations of other principals' performances and the writer's own performances as a principal.

Other studies can be conducted to determine the extent of influence that performances have on principal leadership. Various personnel employed in the local school setting or within the school district can contribute significantly to our understanding of principal performances.

One study could focus on the influence of principal performances on subordinates who aspire to the principalship. The results of such a study could have implications for colleges and universities to include performances in a course offering for students desiring to obtain graduate certification in administration or for local school systems to provide staff development for prospective principals in effective presentation skills.

Public school superintendents and school board members could be surveyed to determine the influence that performances have on the final decision to recommend a person for a principal position. The results of the study would indicate how much importance is given by superintendents and boards of education in hiring principals

who are able to project an authentic and sincere image in their relationships with various audiences.

Central office personnel could be surveyed to assess how much importance they attribute to principal performances. Supervisors, coordinators, and directors of various school systems could be asked to complete a questionnaire indicating their rating of performances as compared to other aspects of principal leadership.

Persons who have served local school districts as outside evaluators could provide information on the influence of principal performances on the final ratings placed on the principal evaluation instrument. The subjective feedback given to these principals by the outside evaluators could be analyzed to determine if principals' performances contributed to their receiving a particular rating on some portion of the evaluation instrument.

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